

**The Commanders-in-Chief, USSOUTHCOM (1987-1991): Reflections  
and Insights on Full Spectrum Operations**

**A MONOGRAPH  
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## ABSTRACT

THE COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF, USSOUTHCOM (1987-1991):  
REFLECTIONS AND INSIGHTS ON FULL SPECTRUM OPERATIONS  
by Major Annette L. Torrisi, USAR, 59 pages.

This monograph examines the legacy that has been passed down from the personal recollections made by the Commanders-in-Chief, U.S. Southern Command regarding planning and/or execution of full spectrum operations in Panama.

The focus of this paper is on the thoughts and recollections of two dynamic leaders, General Frederick Frank Woerner, Jr. and Maxwell Reid Thurman. It examines their ideas and visions that subsequently shaped U.S. military operations in Panama, 1989-1991. This paper concentrates on actual first person documentation -- taped archived interviews -- by the CINCs as opposed to inferential accounts made by others. A steadfast effort has been made to capture, in their own words, the considerations, viewpoints and intent they had in shaping the planning and execution of U.S. military operations in Panama.

This paper first looks at some of the key historical conditions that shaped the nature of the U.S. military presence in Panama. Second and thirdly, it focuses on capturing and examining the backgrounds of and recollections made by Woerner and Thurman respectively. Implications and conclusions of the leadership experience are then scrutinized to identify lessons learned in order to enhance and contribute to the institutional body of literature regarding the full spectrum of U.S. military operations.

The leadership and operational experiences of Woerner and Thurman support the papers conclusion that the commander's vision is paramount in shaping the planning and execution of military action across the full spectrum of operations. Their experiences are timeless, resonating the cognitive and creative challenges leaders face in shaping and translating a vision into tangible action. In very different ways, both CINCs practiced operational art by translating the strategic aim, drawing on personal experience, critically analyzing military operations across full spectrum operations, and tackling complex, evolving situations as interdependent.

This study emphasizes that the commander's vision is the essential element in translating cognitive ideas into tangible action; it is the driving force behind creative, responsive and relevant application of combat power. By envisioning a *Panamanian solution to the Panamanian problem* this paper illustrates how both leaders ultimately contributed to the emerging stability of the Panamanian infrastructure and ability for U.S. forces to gradually disengage from the country. The purpose of this monograph is to illustrate that the legacy left behind by Generals Woerner and Thurman remains timeless and applicable to future U.S. military interventions.

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## I. Introduction

***“A picture without a background is both uninteresting and misleading. Hence, in order to paint you an intelligent picture ... as it exists today, we must provide an historical background”<sup>1</sup> – George S. Patton, Jr.***

A leader's vision is a powerful force, which can shape and manifest itself in the development and execution of military plans. Two dynamic leaders, General Frederick Frank Woerner, Jr. and General Maxwell Reid Thurman, shaped the creation and execution of contingency planning and operations in Panama. Synthesis of their candid thoughts and recollections reveals the influential vision and intent harbored by these two Generals. Their ideas subsequently shaped the course of events during military operations in Panama, 1989-1991.

Their ideas and visions remain relevant, especially since the closure of this century has prompted the U.S. Army to review its past and seek to *divine* and *define* its role and relevance into the twenty-first century.<sup>2</sup> Military leadership is challenged to adapt and react to the New World disorder while competently preparing for and executing full spectrum operations.<sup>3</sup> While bold and innovative ideas are necessary for change, the backdrop of the past can serve future operations by providing an anchor to cast off from. Envisioning what the future may hold is an arduous enterprise for today's military leadership; a plethora of ideas can be found by tapping into the leadership experience of the past.

Part of reviewing this past is to analyze the varied context of the Army experience, to include the thoughts and visions harbored by some of the most dynamic military leaders of this century. Throughout its inception, leaders of the U.S. Army have guided the planning and execution of military operations over a broad spectrum of

missions, ranging from full-scale war to operations other than war. Although the Army's fundamental purpose is to fight and win the Nation's wars, military operations other than war encompass a "wide range of activities where the military instrument of national power is used for purposes other than large-scale combat operations."<sup>4</sup> Leaders of the past, present and of the future will continue to be challenged by the complexity and simultaneity of full-spectrum military operations.

The U.S. invasion of Panama is a contemporary military operation that captures full spectrum operations and the challenges leaders contend with in such environments. Extensive literature exists detailing the tactical execution of the U.S. invasion of Panama and a handful of material captures the post-conflict mission. However, even more obscure than the detailing of the post-conflict operation is a consolidated memoir that captures the essence of the military leaders that shaped the intervention.

General Woerner and General Thurman, in their roles as Commander in Chief (CINC), U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), both influenced U.S. military operations in Panama. Both leaders operated in complex environments, shaping the military planning effort and addressing contingencies across the full spectrum of military operations. In shaping the contingency plans (CONPLANS), Woerner and Thurman led the effort from very different perspectives. Their intent and vision, regarding the use of military force, guided the process. While acknowledging the differences and intricacies of each leader's circumstances, the CINC's vision and how they dealt with the complexity of the environment impacted on how the Army organization approached problem solving in both the development and execution of the U.S. military intervention in Panama.

The focus of this paper is on the thoughts and recollections of the two CINCs rather than a detailed, historical chronology of U.S.-Panama relations. Also, the events resulting in the use of force in Panama have been recounted in numerous publications and are not revisited here.<sup>5</sup> Instead, this paper seeks to answer the question: is there a legacy that can be passed down from the personal recollections made by the CINCs USSOUTHCOM regarding planning and/or execution of full spectrum operations? This paper concentrates on utilizing primary sources -- taped archived interviews, given by the CINC, USSOUTHCOM, Woerner and Thurman respectively. A steadfast effort has been made to capture, in their own words, the considerations, viewpoints and intent they had in shaping the planning and execution of U.S. military operations in Panama.<sup>6</sup> Where possible, secondary sources have been utilized to round out some of these themes. Additionally, a clear, linear pattern of issues does not necessarily fall-out as commonplace between the two men. They had very different perspectives and thoughts. Dixon Wector once wrote of history, "... as an art it must seize upon the durable and significant, firmly rejecting the rest ... [and] if the historian warps his evidence to fit some prejudice or preconceived pattern, he has failed us."<sup>7</sup> In compiling this history, Dixon Wector's words have served as an inspiration to accurately capture the recollections of both Woerner and Thurman.

This paper first looks at some of the key historical conditions that shaped the nature of the U.S. military presence in Panama.<sup>8</sup> Second and thirdly, it focuses on capturing and examining the backgrounds of and recollections made by Woerner and Thurman respectively. Implications and conclusions of the leadership experience are

then scrutinized to identify lessons learned in order to enhance and contribute to the institutional body of literature regarding the full spectrum of U.S. military operations.

## II. Scene Setter

***“To develop effective campaign and operational plans in a crisis—even an episodic and lingering one like Panama—a clear policy supported by well-articulated strategy is required.”<sup>9</sup> - John T. Fishel***

On December 20, 1989, the U.S. military descended onto Panama and launched a swift combat mission that became known to the world as OPERATION JUST CAUSE. This warfighting mission captured the eyes and ears of the world as the U.S. armed forces achieved its aims of creating an environment safe for Americans, ensuring the integrity of the Panama Canal, providing a stable environment for the freely elected Endara government, and bringing Manuel Noregia to justice.<sup>10</sup> JUST CAUSE ended on January 3, 1990 as the U.S. achieved its combat aims. Simultaneously, a lesser-known mission, operation PROMOTE LIBERTY<sup>11</sup> was launched concurrently with operation JUST CAUSE, exemplifying the complexity, simultaneity and seamless nature full spectrum operations can take.

Full spectrum operations encompass the range of military operations, in both war and military operations other than war (MOOTW).<sup>12</sup> This wide range of military application challenges leaders to remain cognizant of the complexity, lethality and variations in the application of combat power. Both Woerner and Thurman, as CINC, USSOUTHCOM, formulated their commander’s intent or vision – which guided the planning effort across the full spectrum of operations. The contingency plans went through a series of revisions and code names. A brief overview of these is provided to provide a common vocabulary when addressing the plans.



The original plans that USSOUTHCOM had drafted, under the command of General Woerner, were code-named ELABORATE MAZE. The planning for this series was initiated in November 1987.<sup>13</sup> The ELABORATE MAZE plans were updated and renamed PRAYER BOOK. In April of 1988, the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William Crowe, approved for execution planning the PRAYER BOOK series of plans.<sup>14</sup> The series of plans which collectively made up PRAYER BOOK included *Post Time*, *Klondike Key*, *Blue Spoon* and *Krystal Ball*.

The contingencies all comprised different phases and/or operations that could occur simultaneously if the situation warranted. *Post Time* was a plan for the build-up of forces; *Klondike Key* was a noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO); *Blue Spoon* was the actual fighting portion of the plan; and the stability and support operations were addressed in *Krystal Ball*, which was later renamed *Blind Logic*. Prior to execution in December 1989, code-names were once again changed. *Blue Spoon* was renamed JUST CAUSE and *Blind Logic* became PROMOTE LIBERTY.<sup>15</sup> Throughout the evolution of the PRAYER BOOK contingencies a myriad of factors influenced their development to include the political-military environment and guidance from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. These factors fluctuated with White House administrations and the conditions set by historical precedence.

The U.S. and Panama have a rich, intertwined political-military history dating back to the mid-1800's. This relationship shaped the contemporary challenges faced by the political administration and the CINC, USSOUTHCOM. Politically, the U.S. intervention in 1989-1991 was challenged to provide a supporting infrastructure while allowing the fragile Endara government to publicly take the reigns and ultimately take

responsibility for Panama's success or failure in returning to a democratic system. While an entire historical recount cannot be made here, some highlights are relevant in understanding the perspective and precedence set by the past. The historical nature of the U.S. military presence in Panama, the unique characteristics of Panama's democracy, the creation and subsequent developments of the Panamanian National Guard and the cultural traditions of the region all bore relevance in shaping U.S. military intervention across the full spectrum of operations.

### ***U.S.-Military Presence in Panama***

The relationship between the U.S. military and the government of Panama has been complex, starting in the late 1800's and continuing into the present. Between 1850 and 1900, the U.S. intervened thirteen times as Panama struggled through forty political administrations, fifty riots, and five attempts at secession from Columbia. In 1903, the U.S. lent military and political support to the Panamanian secessionist party and extended formal recognition of Panama on 6 November. Without the military presence of the U.S., it is unlikely the Republic of Panama would have achieved or maintained its independence from Columbia.<sup>16</sup> Within two weeks, in return for making the republic's independence secure, the U.S. obtained the right to construct, operate, maintain, and defend the Panama Canal.<sup>17</sup> This same year the U.S. sent the Marines to Panama to protect the railroad crossing the isthmus and provide security for the canal construction.

Through the years the U.S. military presence expanded as the Pentagon "saw Panama as a foreign country in a strategic location where military bases could maintain a U.S. presence in the hemisphere at relatively little cost."<sup>18</sup> In 1915, the Army established a formal headquarters and in 1941 the U.S. Caribbean Defense Command was formed to

assume operational control for air, land, and sea forces in the region. This joint presence expanded through the years, into what became the contemporary U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), as U.S.-Panama military relations continued to take shape, marked by periods of relative harmony as well as strain.

Although many factors contributed to the tensions, one dominant issue that remained a constant was the Panamanian desire for sovereignty and a diminished in-country role of the U.S. The canal that brought the U.S. and Panama together also drove them apart. Ultimately a diplomatic resolution was achieved in the 1977 Panama Canal Treaties, which represented a turning point in U.S.-Panamanian relations. It was a complex, phased agreement in which the U.S. agreed to gradually withdraw from the Canal Zone, spanning a period of over two decades, ultimately turning the canal zone over to Panamanian control. The advent of the treaty fulfilled Panama's vision to independently embrace her nation without a U.S. military presence on 31 December 1999.<sup>19</sup>

The phased hand-over of the Canal Zone was temporarily interrupted with the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989, operation JUST CAUSE. Although popular sentiment received the U.S. military as liberators from the heavy-handed rule of Noriega, it was a fragile sentiment that could quickly change if the U.S. was perceived as reneging on the long-term spirit and conditions of the treaty. It was this delicate balance that prompted debate within both the Reagan and Bush Administrations in policy formulation. The evolving policy impacted how the CINC, USSOUTHCOM envisioned and shaped the use of force.

### ***Panamanian Democracy & Military Influence***

Another issue the military plans had to contend with was the restoration of Panama's *democracy*. However, a review of the Panamanian political setting reveals that restoration of democracy was an inaccurate description of what was to take place.

"While the Panamanian government had been based on a constitutional framework and electoral process, it would be erroneous to refer to a democratic legacy that could be restored."<sup>20</sup> The political system in Panama was marred by nepotism, corruption, and the absence of fair and honest elections conducted by the general populace. From 1903 through World War II, Panama experienced internal political discord due to the concentration of political power in the hands of a few traditional upper class families. These families built an oligarchy consisting primarily of old families of Spanish descent.<sup>21</sup> Shortly after the war, in 1951, "political corruption and economic adversity exasperated Panama's tense political climate."<sup>22</sup> This resulted in the impeachment of the Panamanian President Arias; when he refused to vacate the presidential palace it was stormed and taken over by the Panamanian National Police Force.

The institution of the National Police Force emerged as a political protagonist, with Jose Antonio Remon at its helm. Remon converted the National Police into the National Guard, modernized the force, and with the power of the institution behind him frequently manipulated the political process. He used his power to install and remove presidents with ease.<sup>23</sup> In 1952, Remon resigned from the National Police Force and became the nation's President. It was during this time that the National Police Force fully transitioned to the National Guard, resulting in a paramilitary force that was closely intertwined with the civilian political process. The National Guard was empowered over

the next three years as it grew in size, received increased U.S. assistance and participated in joint maneuvers with neighboring countries. Its powers were tapered in 1955 upon the assassination of Remon.

The next twelve years witnessed relative stability of the government as elections were held and new Presidents ushered in; however, the oligarchy returned and was challenged by growing socio-economic unrest. A turning point in Panamanian politics took place in 1968 when Arnulfo Arias, a controversial military officer, won the presidential elections. To thwart its independence, he immediately directed changes in the leadership of the National Guard. However Arias misjudged the degree of camaraderie in the Guards upper echelon as they united, conducted a coup, established a provisional junta, disbanded the National Assembly and all political parties.<sup>24</sup> Political attention then shifted on the make up of the junta; meanwhile, a new leader arose in the National Guard, Omar Torrijos Herrera.

Omar Torrijos quickly consolidated political power, brutally suppressing the opposition utilizing the Guard's Intelligence Unit to identify his enemies. He held in check civilian institutions and political parties while empowering the National Guard with continued power and influence. He encouraged Guard officers to profit from their position in government and he personally promoted officers frequently. He further empowered the force by retaining both military and police force responsibilities that defended the regime, by way of repression and human/civil rights violations. It is believed many of the officers were involved in illegal activities such as arms and drug smuggling.<sup>25</sup> The National Guard continued to be shaped by Torrijo's policies and legislation that he endorsed.

The 1972 constitution, introduced by Torrijos, made the National Guard the country's primary political institution. He came to refer to his rule as a "dictatorship with a heart" and designated himself as the "Maximum Leader" of the Panamanian Revolution.<sup>26</sup> By 1978, Torrijos stepped down as the head of the nation and legalized political parties in order to gain U.S. support for the proposed canal treaties. Despite this show of *democratization*, political power remained in the hands of Torrijos and the National Guard. From 1968 until Torrijos' death in 1981, the National Guard continued the expansion, militarization, and professionalism that had begun under Remon in the late 1940s.<sup>27</sup> Following Torrijos' death, the National Guard continued to dominate Panamanian politics as a successive plan was drafted and Manuel Noriega ultimately took the reigns of power.

The military leadership jockeyed for positions within the Guard after Torrijos' death and ultimately compromised on a successive plan. This occurred in March of 1982, with the *Secret Plan Torrijos: The National Guard's Historic Compromise Timetable*. This plan is an example of the organized and long-term vision the Panamanian military had regarding political control of the nation. This conspiratorial plan provided the order in which military leaders would assume the position of the military commander-in-chief, and subsequently when these leaders would then run for the presidency. Manuel Noriega was earmarked to become the commander-in-chief from 1987-1989.<sup>28</sup> However, he had his own agenda and by 1983 this preplanned hierarchy was disrupted by the behind-the-scenes manipulation and rise to power of Manuel Noriega.

In August 1983, after Noriega took power, the Guard's independence grew with the creation of the Panama Defense Forces (PDF). The PDF incorporated the National

Guard, the police, the Canal Defense Force, the traffic department, the immigration service and the small naval and air forces. Noriega promised the National Guard that its reorganization would prepare it to defend the Panama Canal in accordance with the 1977 treaties, as well as continuing its role in the nation's internal defense and development. The U.S. helped to fund and train the emerging PDF.

Like Torrijos, Noriega appointed military officers to leadership positions within the PDF and placed them in key positions in a number of governmental bodies. Additionally, the military's involvement in the drug and arms trade, which started under Torrijos, flourished under Noriega's reign. The landmark legislation, Law 20, widened the scope of PDF authority and autonomy. Of note, it placed the control of all airports and port facilities under the PDF, granted the military the arbitrary power to close down the press and arrest civilians, and took away civilian authority to exercise dismissal of any PDF commander.<sup>29</sup> In effect, what remained of the democratic process was eliminated and the PDF, specifically Noriega, was in firm control of the nation.

### ***U.S. Policy in the late 1980's***

Starting in 1987, during the Reagan Administration, a series of events escalated the domestic political crisis in Panama. Initially, the one firm policy was, by decision of President Reagan, a prohibition on the use of U.S. military force to remedy the *Noriega crisis*.<sup>30</sup> However, U.S. concerns were heightened with the rise of Noriega to power, the orchestration of pro-government demonstrations and anti-U.S. riots in 1987. At this time, definite objectives for U.S. policy were still lacking because of the lack of consensus among policymakers.<sup>31</sup> On 26 June 1987, the U.S. Senate approved a resolution calling for democracy in Panama and threatened to suspend U.S. development aid and military

assistance. Within one month U.S. military assistance was cut off, assistance the PDF historically depended on to train and equip the force. By mid-March, the U.S. imposed economic sanctions against Panama and encouraged the PDF to oust Noriega. However, PDF coup attempts remained unsuccessful.<sup>32</sup>

Tensions between the U.S. and Panama were catapulted forward in February 1988 due to two key events, the indictment by U.S. Attorneys of Noriega on drug charges and the consolidation of power by Noriega after he won a stand-off with the Panamanian President, Eric Arturo Delvalle. Even those who advocated a more active U.S. role in ousting Noriega saw the indictments as a mistake. They added a major, new objective to U.S. policy but did not serve the interests of such actors as the State Department and the National Security Council (NSC).

Early in April 1988, Lieutenant General Collin Powell, then the President's National Security Advisor, admitted the Reagan Administration's policy of imposing economic sanctions, intended to oust Noriega, had not been sufficient. While the State Department advocated military intervention, Powell presented arguments against the use of force. President Reagan articulated in May 1988, "Noriega must go," making it clear the U.S. would drop the drug indictment charges if Noriega would agree to step down in Panama.<sup>33</sup> An agreed upon deal never did materialize. Tensions between the U.S. and Panama mounted as negotiations and economic pressures were levied and soon discussions reemerged over unilateral U.S. military action.

However, serious consideration and review of the use of force in Panama did not take place until 1988, when the Bush Administration took over the White House.<sup>34</sup>

"Although the Bush Administration had hoped for a coup or some other solution from



within the PDF [Panamanian Defense Forces], no one was willing to risk U.S. forces in a hasty, unplanned operation.”<sup>35</sup> Therefore, if the U.S. was going to intervene with military force it would do so on its own timetable. The 7 May 1989 election fraud in Panama and a spree of violence prompted the Bush administration to recall the U.S. Ambassador, Arthur Davis. Additionally, the President ordered the deployment of a brigade sized military force to provide extra protection for U.S. citizens. The Chairman, JCS, Admiral Crowe “agreed to the reinforcement with reluctance” after the President overruled him on the grounds that a show of U.S. resolve was needed to deter more violence and stabilize the canal zone.<sup>36</sup> In the fall of 1989, Collin Powell returned to Washington, this time as the Chairman, JCS. With new direction and guidance from Washington, USSOUTHCOM moved forward with contingency planning. General Frederick F. Woerner, Jr. and General Maxwell Reid Thurman both played crucial roles in shaping the plans.

### **III. Frederick F. Woerner, Jr.**

***“In Wars of intervention [it is] essential ... to secure a general who is both a statesman and a soldier...”<sup>37</sup> - Antonine H. Jomini***

General Frederick F. Woerner, Jr., had served as the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Southern Command since April of 1987. He had been asked to extend his command an additional year when abruptly, in July of 1989, he was told “the President has decided to make a change.”<sup>38</sup> A career soldier-diplomat, this sudden turn of events took General Woerner by surprise.<sup>39</sup> Characterized as a practical, honest, by-the-book man<sup>40</sup> his retirement marked the end of a career dedicated and divided between infantry assignments and duties associated with Latin America.

## ***Background***

A native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Frederick Frank Woerner, Jr. was born on 12 August 1933. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point Class of 1955, he has long experience in a variety of assignments in Central and South America. Woerner commanded infantry units at the platoon, company, battalion and brigade level. He is a ranger, a parachutist and combat veteran of Vietnam. In addition to his skills as an infantryman, Woerner served on staffs at every echelon through the Army General Staff. He gained regional expertise by studying, traveling and living in a variety of countries to include Columbia, the northern countries of South America, Guatemala, Uruguay and Panama.<sup>41</sup> As a Major General, he served in Panama as the Commander, 193<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade and the Commander, U.S. Army Security Assistance Agency, Latin America. Fluent in Spanish, General Woerner was intimately familiar with Panama and the Panamanians.<sup>42</sup>

## ***The Commander's Intent/Vision***

In 1987, the standing operation plans in Panama were oriented on defense of the Panama Canal. With mounting tensions between Panama and the U.S., General Woerner felt the need to develop new contingency plans, despite being told that the Reagan Administration did not intend to use force in Panama.<sup>43</sup> Regardless, the CINC moved forward with planning, if for nothing else than to train his staff. He recalls, "We didn't anticipate [ever actually executing] that plan. Washington was telling me it was not in their interest to intervene militarily. I thought, at that stage, the planning was more of a vehicle-- a training experience."<sup>44</sup> His overarching planning guidance to his staff was to "be prepared to execute at anytime, anyway, [and in] any form ...be prepared to start

initiating operations with any of these phases, for example [my intent was that] we could have initiated combat operations prior to any reinforcements, deployment, using just in place forces.”<sup>45</sup> He saw flexibility and adaptability as key elements in moving forward and devising planning scenarios.

Although Washington did not envision ever having to activate the contingency plans, this was foremost in General Woerner’s mind when his staff embarked upon developing the initial concepts. He wanted the plans to have flexibility in order to remain relevant and responsive. He did not envision a traditional, linear, phased operation. Instead he notes,

I had a concept of a sequence of operations designed so that we could begin the operations at any point and similarly we could terminate operations at any point. Or furthermore, we could run some, various phases concurrently as required. That was the rationale behind [the] sequencing. The importance of the sequencing was not that they originally followed one another but they provided a frame of reference, for discreet planning for each phase ... so we could initiate either operation[s].<sup>46</sup>

Stressing the construction of a separate versus phased plan, Woerner explains “the idea of phasing discreet plans, [was to] be able to start at any point, be able to terminate at any point, switch the order if somehow that should be advised, run two or more simultaneously, it had total flexibility.”<sup>47</sup> The construction of the contingency plans was intentionally designed to remain responsive and relevant in the face of the fluid, evolving political situation.

### ***Developing the Plan***

As the USSOUTHCOM staff moved forward with contingency planning, they were given strict guidance from Admiral Crowe, then the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was opposed to military confrontation in Panama, stressing to Woerner “do not do

anything provocative ... keep this on the back burner.”<sup>48</sup> Woerner resonated this guidance to his staff, stressing to them how “explosive it would be [politically] if there was a leak ... we were doing planning, even though it was contingency planning.”<sup>49</sup> This guidance was cited over and over again as a *constraint*<sup>50</sup> that the General and his planners had to contend with. Planning moved forward, albeit secretly, without interagency coordination.

The lack of interagency coordination required that Woerner and his staff make several assumptions, while working in a planning vacuum, which ultimately shaped the contingencies. He laments, “in Washington there was a fundamental problem that was never overcome during my watch ... the Defense [DoD], given the timing of these plans, did it in secrecy and did not share it with the State for fear of leaks.”<sup>51</sup> Therefore military planners made several key assumptions, that upon review prior to execution, received much criticism. Of note, the staff assumed U.S. Army South (USARSO) would act as the Joint Task Force (JTF) and retain command and control of the forces. Secondly, it was assumed the force build-up would be gradual. Thirdly, it was assumed the CINC would be in charge of post-conflict operations, vice the U.S. Ambassador.<sup>52</sup>

The first assumption, made in 1987 by the U.S. SOUTHCOM planners, assumed the Commander, U.S. Army South (USARSO) would serve as the JTF upon the commencement of hostilities. At that time, the USARSO Commander, Major General Bernard Loeffke, advocated this command and control structure. Loeffke too, was a soldier-diplomat, but with “a paratroopers spirit and confidence.”<sup>53</sup> Fluent in Spanish, French, Portuguese, Russian and Chinese, he holds an impressive military record which includes serving three tours in Vietnam with a Special Forces team, multiple planning assignments in the Pentagon, attaché assignments in both Moscow and China, and as the

Chief of Staff, XVIII Airborne Corps. A veteran of several Panama tours, he had a sharp understanding of Latin American politics and culture, and subsequently went on to head the Inter-American Defense Board.<sup>54</sup>

Loeffke wanted USARSO to be the warfighting headquarters and had prepared an operations order of his own in support of the USSOUTHCOM contingency. However, XVIII Airborne Corps commanders and planners felt they were better structured for running an operation the size of BLUE SPOON. The complexity of the plan, the manpower required to staff the JTF and the concept that all augmentation forces would be subordinate to the JTF were issues the planners in XVIII Airborne Corps felt they should be in charge of.<sup>55</sup> Woerner acknowledges, "there could have been some friction, but it didn't make it to my level. I felt the support was first-rate, I never felt there was a lack of support."<sup>56</sup> Admiral Crowe set the conditions for the second assumption, that the force build up would be gradual and in place prior to military action.

The Admiral informed Woerner he would not approve a plan that utilized a surprise attack. Crowe wanted "any operations to be the result of a deliberate build up."<sup>57</sup> This constraint led to a series of assumptions by military planners, as well as the CINC, which shaped how they envisioned the conditions and the use of the U.S. military in Panama. General Woerner contends it was "always my intent to use the build up of military forces as a psychological dimension to solve the problem."<sup>58</sup> He believed a comprehensive, systemic plan, over time, would cause friction between Noriega and the Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF). This friction would set the wheels in motion for the Panamanians to seek and implement long-term change for themselves. He envisioned the use of the military to act as a catalyst rather than a decisive force.

Believing this strategy would succeed, the flow of U.S. forces could then be explained to the Panamanian and international community as training; if not, then the U.S. forces would wait until they had the proper forces in country and fight on their designated timeline. This second scenario, while acknowledged, was not aggressively pursued due to its unpopularity with policymakers and the CINC's belief "we should assist, but we cannot solve the problem, it denies them [Panama] the political maturing of solving the goal of democracy."<sup>59</sup>

Woerner's concept of a gradual introduction of U.S. troops remains controversial, and is oftentimes compared to the gradual escalation policy used by the U.S. during the Vietnam War. However, he did not envision a long-term, large scale intervention along the lines of Southwest Asia; rather, he viewed the gradual introduction of U.S. augmentation forces as a short term military action that would serve as a catalyst for Panamanians to solve Panama's problems. His strategy received sharp, public criticism once General Thurman took over as CINC, U.S. SOUTHCOM.

Another planning assumption that later, upon execution, received criticism was that the CINC would be in charge of post-conflict operations vice the U.S. Ambassador.<sup>60</sup> Woerner recollects,

I asked a fundamental question that no one wanted to answer, and I needed that answer. I asked who is in charge? Who will be in charge of post- [conflict] operations? ... The truth is I could live with either decision but I had to know, because that person then should carry that planning phase and have it all worked out. No one wanted to answer that question, or address the question. Fundamentally no one ever thought, at that stage, the planning stage, that these plans would become operational.<sup>61</sup>

This fundamental question was never answered nor could it be posed to the State Department due to the directive to keep the planning within DoD. Woerner advocated that the CINC be placed in charge because military police and civil affairs units would initially be utilized to reestablish law and order, therefore the post-conflict mission would depend on the resources under the commander of military forces. However, the CINC's efforts to get clarification on this issue went nowhere. Therefore, to move forward with planning, the assumption was made.

While constraints were placed on the planning process, General Woerner pursued interagency coordination through other means, which resulted in the drafting of proposed, long-term strategies designed to facilitate action by the Panamanians to remove Noriega and establish a democracy. With USSOUTHCOM in the lead and with State Department collaboration, two strategies were developed. They were named *Fissures I* and *Fissures II*.

*Fissures I* laid out a series of initiatives that had the fundamental purpose of separating Noriega from the PDF. These initiatives involved a multitude of actions that could be executed by the Defense, State, and Treasury Departments to cause friction between Noriega and the PDF. The CINC sent the plan forward and never heard anything back. So they did it again. *Fissures II* updated the previous plan by incorporating new dimensions. The concept of the *Panama Triad* was introduced whereby the most important leg of the triad was the development of internal opposition to Noriega. The second leg was indirect U.S. support to the opposition, and thirdly the internationalization of the issue.<sup>62</sup> "It was a comprehensive plan, not a shopping list, [you] don't have to do all the initiatives, but they have to be comprehensive. What you

can't do is implement one by one, it is comprehensive, systemic."<sup>63</sup> This time Woerner did receive feedback and it was disappointing. Guidance was to implement individual initiatives without considering the whole.<sup>64</sup>

In considering the totality of the whole operation during the planning process, the staff did not just remain enamored with the hostilities phase, but addressed some of the challenges that would likely crop up if the U.S. became involved in reconstruction or nation-building missions. Woerner notes, "I maintained that the easiest part of the operation was the traditional combat operations. The most difficult part was the post-operational requirements, for the law and order and the civilization of the Republic of Panama."<sup>65</sup> Extensive discussions prompted by the phrase *what if?* occurred between the senior planners and the CINC. They tried to envision the challenges and environment a post-conflict environment would entail. "We assumed in a post-operational environment there would be a total breakdown in law in order, we even talked about rioting and looting. We placed much emphasis on this portion of the plan but we knew it was a hollow plan [because it could not be coordinated outside of the military]. What actually happened [the looting and breakdown in law and order] was foreseen."<sup>66</sup>

General Woerner continued his crusade, with policymakers, for a comprehensive policy toward Latin America. In February 1989, he went before the House Appropriations defense subcommittee and argued for a strategy that comprehensively addressed an understanding of the region and its effects on the American economy, political interests, and the military. Later that month, in a speech to the American Chambers of Congress he criticized the lack of a cohesive U.S. strategy in Panama. His speech, "accurately described the situation, but it provoked a firestorm when it was



reported in the New York Times; such direct criticism of the President by a serving military officer was out of bounds.”<sup>67</sup> In May, when several congressmen went down to Panama to observe the elections they were stunned when Woerner would not guarantee their safety. On 6 July, Woerner was given the news that, “the President has decided to make a change.”<sup>68</sup> He retired from active duty in October 1989 and is currently a Professor of International Relations at Boston University.<sup>69</sup>

Although Woerner’s departure from USSOUTHCOM is clouded with controversy, his initiation of contingency planning was “dramatically forward looking and politically astute.”<sup>70</sup> At the time, he embarked on a process that contradicted stated policy, received little interest or support outside of the command and was riddled with constraints. Despite these roadblocks, his foresight laid the foundation for the execution of JUST CAUSE and PROMOTE LIBERTY, which his replacement, General Thurman would oversee.

#### **IV. Maxwell Reid Thurman**

***“You are now considered the MacArthur of Panama. I am reminded of his plea to the Pentagon when he started to rebuild Japan: ‘Send me food or send me bullets ...’”<sup>71</sup> - Bernard Loeffke, Major General, U.S. Army***

Max Thurman seemed to epitomize the type of Army officer who is totally devoted to the Army; he is alleged to have declared (only partially in jest), “if the Army wanted you to have a wife, it would have issued you one with your TA-50.”<sup>72</sup> It was a cliché among those who knew and worked for Thurman that he was married to the Army.<sup>73</sup> A small framed man with thick glasses, characterized as a bachelor workaholic, he and his staffs often worked nights and weekends. He demanded that his subordinates

work as hard and as loyally as he did. This earned Thurman the nicknames of *Mad Max*, *Maxatollah* and *Emperor Maximilian*.<sup>74</sup> An intense, intelligent, driven man, his communication style was marked with candor and piercing directness. Scheduled to retire in the summer of 1989, with less than a month remaining on active duty, he was asked to postpone his departure. In mid-July, the Army Chief of Staff, Carl Vuono, informed Thurman that he had been recommended to the Secretary of Defense to assume the position of CINC, USSOUTHCOM.<sup>75</sup> Never hesitating, General Thurman rose to the challenge of this unexpected turn of events.

### ***Background***

A native of High Point, North Carolina, Maxwell Reid Thurman was born on February 18, 1931. He attended North Carolina State University at Raleigh, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering. While in college he was enrolled in the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program and upon completion, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant. Thurman dedicated his life, twenty-eight assignments in thirty-seven years, as an Army officer, serving the last seven as a four-star general.<sup>76</sup> Although not all-inclusive, some of his career highlights follow.

Upon his commissioning in 1953, Thurman attended Ordnance Officer Training at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland. Throughout his career, he also received notable service training at the Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Advanced Artillery Officer School, Command and General Staff College and the Army War College. Diverse assignments both stateside and overseas, command and staff positions, and early combat experience in Vietnam characterize his career. After combat duty he became a Company Tactical Officer at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point. Several years later

he commanded the division artillery within the elite 82d Airborne, then went to work in the Pentagon. It was his follow-on assignment as the Commanding General, U.S. Army Recruiting Command<sup>77</sup> at Fort Sheridan where he received notoriety.

Some believe Thurman had the most direct impact on the post-Vietnam Army during his leadership of the Army Recruiting Command, a position he held from November of 1979 to July of 1981. This post was often viewed as a career ender for an Army officer; where others had stagnated, Thurman shined.<sup>78</sup> He scrapped the pleading, previous recruiting slogan of *Today's Army Wants You to Join* and replaced it with the aggressive *Be All That You Can Be* advertising campaign. He is credited with helping to revitalize the post-Vietnam force by reinstilling the notions of pride, adventure and patriotism.<sup>79</sup>

After energizing the Recruiting Command, General Thurman was assigned to the Pentagon as the Army's deputy chief of staff for personnel. His success in that job led to his selection to be the Army's Vice Chief of Staff with promotion to four stars. Following that assignment he led the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC); from there he planned to retire from the Army in the summer of 1989.<sup>80</sup> However, Max Thurman was selected to fill the upcoming void due to the unforecasted retirement of General Frederick F. Woerner, CINC USSOUTHCOM.<sup>81</sup> He was not the most obvious choice for a successor because he had made his name not as a troop commander, but rather as a staff officer with a penchant for detail. Familiar battleground for Thurman was the bureaucracy in Washington, D.C. However, what he did possess was "something Woerner had never had: the trust of senior leaders in Washington, both at the White House and in the Pentagon."<sup>82</sup>

### *The Ramp-up*

On 5 August 1989 General Thurman's retirement ceremony turned into a change of command, as he departed the Army Training and Doctrine Command and readied himself for USSOUTHCOM. Since Thurman was not going to assume his follow-on post until 30 September, he used this grace period to learn the details of the region and the issues faced by the command. Unlike his predecessor, Thurman was not a Latin American expert nor did he speak a foreign language. His knowledge base resulted from the extensive amount of time he spent in Washington, D.C. where he met with multiple inter-agency staffers and 'experts' on the region.<sup>83</sup> To familiarize himself with the Spanish language, Thurman attended a crash course at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California.<sup>84</sup>

Possessing rudimentary foreign language skills and assimilating assessments made by those in Washington, D.C., Thurman felt that he had become very knowledgeable on the region and more specifically, of the situation brewing in Panama. Shortly after assuming his post, Thurman commented that he "understood the dynamics of the situation ... I think I got myself pretty well engrained into the issues and what needed to have my early attention."<sup>85</sup> One area that quickly got his attention was the contingency plans for military operations in Panama.<sup>86</sup>

Upon initially receiving the BLUE SPOON briefing in August, Thurman's first reaction was that it was an unworkable operation for two reasons. First, he believed "the principle deficiency in the plan was it featured a 150 hour build-up phase ... that it depended on everybody standing fast on the PDF side while the operation went down."<sup>87</sup> Secondly, he did not feel the issue of command and control was adequately addressed,

dubbing it "obfuscate."<sup>88</sup> He took his concerns to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, recollecting, "... he [Admiral Crowe] never articulated to my recollection that he condemned the previous plan ... he tolerated the plan ... in my case, I didn't think the plan was worth a damn."<sup>89</sup>

It was with this conviction that on the last weekend in September 1989, General Thurman assumed command of the USSOUTHCOM. On the spot, he settled the command and control concerns he harbored and resolved the command and control issues that XVIII Airborne Corps had regarding the JTF.<sup>90</sup> The Corps commander, Lieutenant General Carl W. Stiner, attended the change of command ceremony. Following the ceremony, Thurman went up to him and said, "Carlos, you are my man for Panama. I hold you responsible for all contingency planning and combat operations."<sup>91</sup> Thurman had not commanded forces in the field for over fourteen years. His confidence in Stiner was well placed.

As the Commander, XVIII Airborne Corps, Stiner had the best equipment, an operations staff three times the size of the CINC's staff in Panama, a large intelligence staff and the latest technology in communications equipment.<sup>92</sup> Stiner brought to the fight his experience as a Vietnam veteran possessing a strong tactical and special operations background.<sup>93</sup> Thurman believed that whoever owned XVIII Airborne Corps would be the warfighter in charge of contingency operations in Panama because the staff in Panama, "isn't big enough, doesn't have enough people on it, [and] is not smart enough to do the warfighting game. They can do their part of it but they can't be the conceptual organizers of it."<sup>94</sup> Thurman lamented that as a regional CINC he felt he had "a group of foreign area specialists who weren't warfighters."<sup>95</sup> As the new CINC, Thurman

acknowledged that his decision caused a “certain amount of heartache on the grounds [I] had come in with this guy from Fort Bragg. I think that one could say fairly that they [USSOUTHCOM subordinate commanders and staff] thought that was an affront to their planning skills and the like. [However] they weren’t capable of doing the contingency planning.”<sup>96</sup> His mind made up, Thurman stepped up the contingency planning effort in response to mounting tensions in Panama and guidance from the new CJCS.

General Colin L. Powell assumed the position as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) the same weekend Thurman took over as CINC USSOUTHCOM.<sup>97</sup> As a former National Security Advisor (NSA) familiar with U.S.-Panama relations, Powell brought insight into his position as the CJCS. During the Reagan Administration, he had witnessed the debate over Noriega’s indictment, a *friendly head of state*. At the time of the indictments Powell did not support the use of U.S. forces to remove Noriega. However, the political winds had changed and the new CJCS made it a priority to examine the Panama plans, recognizing that Panama was a military crisis waiting to happen. He wanted a detailed review to commence, focusing on the use of *surprise*, *speed* and the *night*. He advocated not just removing Noriega from power, but also the dismantling the now corrupt PDF.<sup>98</sup> Thurman, responding to the new guidance, stepped up the operations tempo in USSOUTHCOM.

### ***The Commander’s Intent/Vision***

General Maxwell Thurman wasted little time. After his change of command ceremony on a Saturday, he went straight to his office. His staff gave him a battery of detailed briefings on his area of responsibility, with an emphasis on the current situation in Panama. From day one, they experienced his penchant for long hours, hard work and

attention to detail. The next morning, Sunday, he was in his office, just as if it were another workday.<sup>99</sup> Initial impressions, from his briefings in both Washington and those from his new staff, set the tone for the CINC's planning assumptions and the concept of operations he envisioned for the potential use of military forces in Panama.

The tone was also influenced by the Bush Administration's shift in policy against Noriega. By the fall of 1989, Noriega's ouster and replacement by a democratic government was gaining priority.<sup>100</sup> A failed coup attempt on 3 October 1989, by the PDF against Noriega, prompted a revision of USSOUTHCOM's contingency plans. The U.S. media seized on the failed coup attempt and the perceived lack of a coherent response or assistance by the Bush Administration. Over the next 48 hours, both Democrats and Republicans in Congress attacked the Administration for failing to respond to the coup attempt. The *Washington Post* headlined an article entitled *An Unserious Presidency* while the *L.A. Times* characterized the President as a *wimp*. Following the bad press and the outcry on the hill, the CINC felt it was implicit that President Bush would not tolerate being characterized as passive, or without a Latin American strategy.<sup>101</sup> His instincts were on the mark and General Powell soon gave Thurman new guidance.

The Chairman's guidance to Thurman included several key planning guidelines to such as a need for a *wider range of military options phased over time*; development of a *capability to respond on short notice*; *integration of conventional and special operations forces*; and the *assumption that the PDF would not be neutral or friendly*.<sup>102</sup> With this new guidance in hand Thurman refined the targeting, streamlined command and control and aggressively stepped up rehearsals.<sup>103</sup> The commander's vision became translated

into action. Furthermore, he refined his intent for the combat phase of the operation. The Commander's Intent for BLUESPOON/JUST CAUSE was captured as the following:

The principal objective of our operations is to neutralize the Panama Defense Force (PDF), while protecting U.S. lives, and key sites and facilities. The political goals we are supporting are the removal of NORIEGA and the establishment of a U.S.-recognized government in PANAMA. We will take advantage of the confusion surrounding a coup, or coup attempt, against NORIEGA, and we will take advantage of any advance warning we might receive regarding a no-notice (0-4 hours), short notice (4-48hrs) and long notice (48hrs plus). In each our objective remains the same ... we must take the necessary actions to protect U.S. lives, and key sites and facilities in PANAMA ..."<sup>104</sup>

### *Developing the Plan*

In reviewing the contingencies, the new CINC focused his attention on the combat portion of the plans, the BLUE SPOON/JUST CAUSE scenario. "Simultaneity became a goal during the planning phase of the [combat] operation and a reality during the execution phase."<sup>105</sup> Unlike the conflict portion of the contingency plans, the post-conflict or restoration phase, PROMOTE LIBERTY received little attention from Thurman. In October 1989, he was briefed on the restoration plan; however, he did not render any guidance or intent. Rather, Thurman relegated that portion of the plan to the commanders and planners of the XVIII Airborne Corps. He clearly states, "I concentrated my work on the tactical plan not on the PROMOTE LIBERTY plan."<sup>106</sup>

Thurman conceptualized three planning scenarios that would commence wartime operations: no-notice (0-4 hours); short-notice (4-48 hours) and deliberate execution (48 hours plus). Thurman drove the planning emphasis to be placed on a short-notice scenario and being ready to execute a military operation in forty-eight hours. However, the Air Force insisted it needed at least sixty hours. Haggling went back and forth between commands. Thurman notes, "Finally the JCS settled the hash— [they] said sixty



hours.” Training exercises were conducted nightly as Thurman sought to “rehearse the plan into perpetuity.”<sup>107</sup> He believed the rehearsals would achieve two goals; it would allow U.S. forces to become proficient and desensitize the adversary.

As the plan went through rehearsal and refinement, Thurman stressed “simultaneity ... you had to take down the whole ... focus must be on taking down the entire apparatus.”<sup>108</sup> He believed that five factors drove the planning conceptualizer to pursue simultaneity rather than a more sequential, incremental approach. Those five conditions included, good intelligence, clearly defined endstates, the element of surprise, the composition of the force and decisive leadership. He further defined this concept as:

Simultaneity is the generation of simultaneous effects that combine to create overwhelming and focused power relative to enemy sources of power (the centers of gravity) in a campaign or major operation. Mass implies concentration in space and time. Simultaneity implies dispersion in space of actions whose effects are concentrated to achieve a specific aim.<sup>109</sup>

In support of simultaneity, Thurman personally immersed himself in the details and refinement of the communications architecture. He ordered his planners to get it down, simplify it, and backbrief him regularly.<sup>110</sup> Upon reflection Thurman advocated that JUST CAUSE offers four lessons that should be considered in planning operations whether unilateral, coalition, U.S. only or UN directed. They are: <sup>111</sup>

1. Preparation for use of force should begin early
2. Overwhelming & simultaneous versus incremental application
3. Careful planning, well-rehearsed preparation & forceful execution
4. Joint & coalition forces can handle complexity if rehearsal time is available

### *Post-conflict Challenges*

General Thurman admittedly did not dedicate himself to the post-conflict contingency plan, either before or after the execution of JUST CAUSE. In May of 1991, he was unable to comment on many of the post-conflict planning questions posed to him by Dr. John T. Fishel.<sup>112</sup> However, as the CINC, he did become deeply involved in the evolving mission as the command wrestled with the complexity of MOOTW.

The execution of MOOTW was done ad hoc. Thurman recalled, "we did not follow a plan, rather we responded to the evolving situation on the ground ... no one had foreseen [many of] the developments." Some of the developments had been addressed in the plan, however, the BLIND LOGIC/PROMOTE LIBERTY plan did not get updated to reflect the changing political-military conditions that evolved since Woerner's departure. Although the USSOUTHCOM J-5 repeatedly tried to present the restoration plan to General Thurman, the CINC's focus remained on planning for hostilities, not post-hostilities.<sup>113</sup> In hindsight, Thurman believed that the restoration mission would have gotten more of his attention had it been phased into the main operations plan rather than exist as a separate contingency plan.<sup>114</sup> In subsequent years, General Thurman took full responsibility for this oversight -- citing it as the greatest mistake in his military career.<sup>115</sup>

Despite the lack of focus on this phase of the operation, the plan did provide the CINC's intent regarding the post-conflict mission. It stated,

... Follow-on operations must be conducted to stabilize the situation in Panama; that is to assist with efforts to restructure the PDF with those PANAMANIANs who will support a democratic government in PANAMA. These follow-on operations should be completed within thirty days.<sup>116</sup>

The CINC's intent reflects a planning assumption that the reconstruction phase would be short-term; however, upon execution, it spanned a period of just over a year. In hindsight, Thurman commented that the contingency "was briefed to the JCS. They then took the plan, and if they saw fit, they did the interagency coordination. I can tell you from my knowledge, the plan was a very closely held plan and chances of it being coordinated in an interagency mode is probably zippo."<sup>117</sup> On Thurman's watch, this lack of interagency coordination and focus by USSOUTHCOM on post-conflict scenarios contributed to the unpreparedness of the command in responding to reconstruction challenges; notably the massive looting and the manpower required to reestablish the embassy.

However, interagency coordination was inevitable once MOOTW missions were initiated. The Bush Administration informed the CINC that the Ambassador would be in charge of the overall nation-building mission. Thurman responded to the JCS with, "NSD 33 stated that the primary point of contact between the U.S. government in Panama and the government of Panama shall be the U.S. Ambassador ... I am prepared to support the Ambassador with worker bees."<sup>118</sup> Thurman fully supported the Ambassador's initial requests for manpower and area expertise. The CINC also distributed a memo within the command to reinforce his support, "When the Ambassador gives you an order, unless it is against statutory direction, it is as good as an order coming from me."<sup>119</sup> Thurman made every effort to ensure the military resources under his command fully supported the State Department.

It was during this phase that Thurman felt, for the first time, the frustration of not getting responsive support from the Administration in the form of economic support to

carry out reconstruction operations. He stressed in a personal memo to General Powell, "If we want to build long-term stability and order, and fulfill the new found hopes and expectations of the Panamanian people, we need to focus on the economy."<sup>120</sup> Thurman decried the refusal of Congress to approve immediate aid to Panama, as President Bush had requested in his proposal to shore up new democracies in Central America.<sup>121</sup> Ultimately, Congress approved \$420 million in aid; however, the process was lengthy and the disbursement of monies was slow and irregular.<sup>122</sup> Relieved, Thurman reported, "The country is beginning to make some progress economically, which in my view is the principal progress to be made."<sup>123</sup>

At the time of JUST CAUSE and PROMOTE LIBERTY, General Thurman led the largest U.S. military operation since the Vietnam War.<sup>124</sup> His penchant for detail and relentless rehearsals contributed to the realization of successful combat operations. In hindsight, it was recognized that the same attention was needed in the planning effort to adequately facilitate smooth transition and execution of the post-conflict mission. Not a healthy man upon assuming command, General Maxwell R. Thurman died on 1 December 1995 of leukemia, at the age of 64 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. Upon learning of the General Thurman's death, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. John M. Shalikashvili said, "Max Thurman loved the Army ... He was a *visionary* who carved out the path for the Army today and, by doing so, showed us courage, talent, intelligence and strength of character."<sup>125</sup>

## V. Implications & Conclusions

*"...when it [comes] to real-world complexities ... The crucial skill [is] insight, the ability to see connections."*<sup>126</sup> --Mitchell Waldrop

The leadership and operational experiences of General Woerner and General Thurman reveal how paramount the commander's vision is in shaping the planning and execution of military action across the full spectrum of operations. Their experiences are timeless, resonating the cognitive and creative challenges leaders face in shaping and translating a vision into tangible action. In very different ways, both CINCs practiced operational art<sup>127</sup> by translating the strategic aim, drawing on personal experience, critically analyzing military operations across full spectrum operations, and tackling complex, evolving situations as interdependent.

At the operational level, both CINCs developed a vision to translate the strategic aim of the policymakers into tactical action. This creative tension<sup>128</sup> manifested itself in the planning efforts and execution of full spectrum operations, specifically JUST CAUSE and PROMOTE LIBERTY. Instrumental in shaping each leaders vision was the guidance and constraints placed on them from national policymakers and the JCS. General Woerner operated in an environment that did not seriously consider the use of military action to address the evolving *Noriega crisis*. While the Reagan Administration remained inert in its struggle for consensus and the development of a coherent policy in Latin America, Woerner moved forward. Propelled by his own intuition and foresight, he led the effort in drafting and developing contingency plans in a severely constrained environment with little input from the JCS. Conversely, when General Thurman assumed his post he was given clear guidance to be prepared to respond with military action. The Bush Administration supported the contingency planning and aggressive rehearsals conducted in Panama. The CJCS gave the CINC clear guidance and priorities for

planning potential combat operations in Panama. Although very different, each developed good plans based on the political guidance provided.

The plans were also shaped by the knowledge, experience and mental models<sup>129</sup> each leader brought to the situation. As an area expert in Latin and South American affairs, Woerner was able to formulate and propose long-term strategies and engagement in the region. With Panama in particular, his fluency in the language, personal interaction with Panamanian leaders and understanding of the culture and history influenced how he envisioned military support and/or intervention. In addition to his expertise in the region, Woerner was also an experienced commander. His knowledge base brought to the planning effort the confidence to trailblaze new contingency plans and encourage problem solving across the full spectrum of operations. On the other hand, General Thurman's knowledge base of the region, and Panama in particular, originated with staffers and policymakers in Washington, D.C. As a consummate Pentagon staffer himself, Thurman was armed and well versed in the politics of *the Beltway*. His insight and experience led him to concentrate on taking actions that appeased major players, such as the XVIII Airborne Corps Commander, and were synchronized with the intent of the National Command Authority. He took their guidance and revamped the contingency plans to reflect and achieve the strategic aim. His focus remained singularly on the war plan, shaping and synchronizing it to great detail. Each leader's knowledge and experience contributed, in very different ways, to the successful translation of their vision by the formulation and revision of the Panama contingency plans.

However, although the CINC's vision was captured in the formulation and revision of the plans, a review and critical analysis of assumptions was needed. Under General Woerner's tenure, multiple suppositions about the future situation were assumed to be true in the absence of fact. Many of these assumptions arose from the lack of policy guidance, prevention of interagency coordination and the inherent challenge of trying to plan for a yet unknown future. Assumptions were made to allow the staff to continue planning in the absence of facts, which prevented paralysis from taking over the effort. With new guidance in hand, Thurman revisited the initial planning assumptions and was able to validate or invalidate them based on the emerging situation. He critically analyzed the war plan assumptions; however, he did not reassess the post-conflict phase. In the absence of comprehending the full spectrum nature of the operation, the CINC ignored the MOOTW portion of the contingency plans. Had they been reviewed, just as in the war plan, it would have been evident that the conjectured post-conflict planning scenarios were based on several assumptions that were no longer valid. Feedback and reassessment throughout all phases of military intervention remains critical.

Once a crisis develops it is critical to revisit the planning assumptions to determine if they are still relevant. In executing full spectrum operations the commander's vision is just as important in shaping the *third day* of war as in shaping the first day. Leaders need to visualize the application of military resources across the continuum of potential missions. This remains a challenge for military leaders because,

Few leaders look forward to the third day of war, the day after the fighting stops. It is just as important to win the peace as it is to militarily defeat the enemy ... Conflict termination is an essential link between national security strategy, national military strategy, and post-conflict aims-the political effects desired. This holds true for both war and measures short of war.<sup>130</sup>

Systems thinking<sup>131</sup> and the ability to tackle complexity are key components in successfully executing war and measures short of war. Full spectrum operations remain complex, dynamic and are continually shaped by the vision, adaptability and feedback that exists in an organization. This allows for timely, creative ad hoc solutions to the evolving situation and prevents the army organization from just *fighting the plan*. Woerner thought holistically by conceptualizing plans that were not phased or sequential; they addressed the full spectrum of operations and could be conducted simultaneously or not at all. Each contingency plan was designed to facilitate situation dependency and flexibility. Thurman translated his vision of systems thinking by spearheading what he coined as *simultaneity* in the combat operations. Both leaders envisioned and considered planning complex military operations that could be responsive and adapt to a fluid environment.

By envisioning a *Panamanian solution to the Panamanian problem* both leaders ultimately contributed to the emerging stability of the Panamanian infrastructure<sup>132</sup> and ability for U.S. forces to gradually disengage from the country. Both leaders viewed the ways and means differently; however, the endstate of an independent, democratic sovereign Panama was a shared vision. While Woerner advocated a long-term strategy that called for military intervention to serve as a catalyst for change, Thurman pushed for an overpowering, short-term U.S. intervention to dramatically reshape the infrastructure. While both strategies have their merits and shortfalls, the hallmark of their intent remains with the determination to allow the Panamanians to actively participate, rebuild and reshape their nation. The U.S. intervention brought with it high expectations for a



prosperous and stable future, expectations that were fulfilled *over time* as democratic processes became secured and the economy revitalized *by the Panamanians*.

In the aftermath, although military folklore tends to popularize wartime commanders, upon introspection, General Woerner laid the creative foundation for future operations in Panama. He went beyond convention and created plans that defied a linear organization, which embodied full spectrum operations, and envisioned multiple strategies to allow the Panamanians to form a Panamanian democracy. His major shortcoming was in not being as politically astute as his replacement. Woerner's inability to translate his vision and ideas effectively outside of his command resulted in the mainstream rejecting his *out of the box* ideas. Thurman, on the other hand, was able to clearly translate the contingency plans, modify them to meet the current situation, and articulate his intent and vision to both the command and JCS. Their different experiences highlight that the commander's visualization must be clearly translated to achieve its full potential.

The answer to the research question is a resounding *yes*; there is a legacy that can be passed down from the personal recollections of both General Woerner and General Thurman regarding planning and/or execution of full spectrum operations. Both leaders had very different personalities, led forces under very different conditions and attacked problem solving from diverse perspectives; however, these diversities make their experiences all the more colorful and complex. Perhaps the most notable revelation in this study was uncovering the genesis of the PRAYER BOOK/ELABORATE MAZE contingencies. They were a result of one mans vision, General Woerner's. His journey and the creative tension he wrestled with resulted in the formation of the original plans.

These original plans addressed the Panama problem *systemically, holistically*, and across the *full spectrum of operations*. The fact he was removed prematurely from his post after expressing, inappropriately, his frustration with the lack of guidance and strategy from policymakers has overshadowed his true merit; he was truly an operational artist.

However, General Thurman's harsh criticism of the plans resonates in military folklore. Upon closer introspection these criticisms were made out of context regarding the planning environment that shaped and constrained the contingency plans. The war plan Thurman executed did not emerge from his original thought or vision, it was a refinement of the original plan, based on clear guidance, attention to detail, and thorough rehearsal. Thurman demonstrated his precision by leading the JUST CAUSE mission; he addressed *simultaneity* in a *limited framework of time and space* and was able to *adapt* to the challenges of the post-conflict mission through *ad hoc responses*. His is a success story because through simultaneous execution he was able to shock and paralyze the adversary resulting in an overwhelming advantage for U.S. forces.

As the Army transforms itself to meet the challenges of a new century, the lessons and legacies of past leaders can help forge new paths and realize yet unknown visions. The Commander's vision remains paramount in translating cognitive ideas into tangible action; it is the driving force behind creative, responsive and relevant application of combat power. Perhaps their timeless lesson of facilitating another nations self-sufficiency, and not imposing a long-term U.S. military intervention, resonates without fanfare, as the ultimate legacy left behind by both General Frederick F. Woerner, Jr. and General Maxwell R. Thurman.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> George Forty, *The Armies of George S. Patton* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co, Inc., 1996), 16. General George S. Patton [1885-1945] believed strongly in harnessing the lessons of the past to shape the current battlefield. This book provides a detailed history of the U.S. Third Army in World War II and gives a great amount of attention to Patton's personal and professional persona.

<sup>2</sup> Eric K. Shinseki, "Address to the Eisenhower Luncheon 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Association of the United States Army," [article on-line] (Speech presented, 12 October 1999, accessed on 13 October 1999); available from e-mail, CSA 99-011, dtd 13 OCT 99 (AUSA Address). General Eric K. Shinseki is currently the U.S. Army Chief of Staff.

<sup>3</sup> United States Army, *Field Manual 100-1, The Army* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, June 1994), 2-3. See also, United States, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations* (Washington DC: JCS Publication, 1 February 1995), V-1. Regarding the Army's future challenges regarding the full spectrum of warfare today and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century see: Eric K. Shinseki, General, "Intent of the Chief of Staff, Army," [memo on-line] (Army Online, Office of the Chief of Staff, accessed 6 July 1999); Available from <http://www.hqda.army.mil/ocsa/intent.ppt>; Internet.

<sup>4</sup> United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations* (Washington D.C.: JCS Publication, 1 February 1995), V-1.

<sup>5</sup> For a comprehensive summary of early US- Panama relations see David McCullough, *The Path Between The Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal 1870-1914* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1977). Several books capture the chronology of JUST CAUSE, a thorough depiction is rendered in the book written by Thomas Donnelly, Margaret Roth, and Henry S. Lucas, *Operation Just Cause: The Storming of Panama* (New York: Lexington Books, 1991).

<sup>6</sup> While it is evident the interviews are guided by the agenda and research interest of the interviewer's, oftentimes, as General Officers will, Woerner and Thurman address and emphasize key issues that they feel are relevant, regardless of the interviewers agenda. Many of these themes reoccur again and again throughout the interviews. Coupled with secondary sources, themes and viewpoints from the senior leader's perspective have been captured.

<sup>7</sup> Dixon Wecter, "How To Write History," *A Sense of History: The Best Writings From the Pages of American Heritage* (New York, New York: American Heritage Press, 1985), 41.

<sup>8</sup> It is beyond the scope of this monograph to provide a comprehensive review of U.S.-Panama political-military relations. The detailing of events resulting in the use of force in Panama have been recounted in numerous publications, they are not revisited here. For a detailed account of both contingency planning and the operation itself see Thomas Donnelly, Margaret Roth, and Caleb Baker, *Operation Just Cause: The Storming of Panama* (New York: Lexington Books, 1991). For broader treatments that focus on the political crisis see Kevin Buckley, *Panama: The Whole Story* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991).

<sup>9</sup> John T. Fishel, *Civil Military Operations in the New World* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 26. Dr. Fishel earned his Ph.D in Political and Administrative Development at Indiana University and has taught at several universities to include the U.S. Army School of International Studies. An Army Reserve officer, he was recalled to active duty in 1986 where he served in a variety of positions in USSOUTHCOM. Of note, LTC Fishel was charged with planning the post-conflict period in Panama while assigned as the Chief of the Policy and Strategy Division. He is renowned for his expertise in Latin America, his real-world experience as a Civil-Military planner, and his writings on civil-military operations in Panama, Kuwait, Somalia, and Haiti.

<sup>10</sup> Donnelly, xi.

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<sup>11</sup> OPERATION PROMOTE LIBERTY was the nation building mission executed simultaneously and following OPERATION JUST CAUSE. For additional information on that operation, see Department of the Army Headquarters, Joint Task Force Panama, "Subject: Activation and Staffing of the US Military Support Group-Panama (USMSG-PM)," (Fort Clayton, Panama, 20 January 1990), 1. For a comprehensive study focusing on the Civil-Military role during PROMOTE LIBERTY see John T. Fishel, "The Fog of Peace: Planning and Executing the Restoration of Panama," (Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute US Army War College, 15 April 1992), 33-64.

<sup>12</sup> United States Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1993), 2-0 thru 2-4. The terminology used in this FM is *The Range of Military Operations* rather than the term used in this paper *Full Spectrum Operations*. A good overview is captured in Figure 2-1. Range of Military Operations in the Theater Strategic Environment. Additionally, the following Concept Paper and Draft of FM 3-0 (FM 100-5) consists of emerging doctrine. Neither source is intended to be used as authoritative, approved doctrine however, the terminology and overarching concept of *Full Spectrum Operations* is used in order to capture contemporary terminology and ideas. For emerging doctrine see, United States Army, Concept Paper for FM 100-5, "The Range of Army Operations" (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1999) and United States, Army, *Field Manual No. 3-0 9 (FM 100-5) Operations [Final Draft]* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 25 April 2000), 1-15 thru 1-19; 6-1 thru 6-26; Part 3.

<sup>13</sup> Donnelly, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Flanagan, 47.

<sup>15</sup> Donnelly, 22-26; Flanagan 46-51.

<sup>16</sup> McCullough, 361-386.

<sup>17</sup> Donnelly, 1-14.

<sup>18</sup> Michael L. Conniff, *Panama and the United States: The Forced Alliance*, ed. by Lester D. Langley, Vol. 5, *United States and the Americas* (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 96.

<sup>19</sup> "Politics-Transport: Panamanian Flag Flying Over Howard Airbase," *CNN*, 1 November 1999 [article on-line] (CNN news, accessed 2 November 1999); Available from <http://my.cnn.com/jbcl/cnews>; Internet. See also, "U.S. Airbase Closes as Panama Canal Handover Looms," *CNN*, 1 November 1999 [article on-line] (CNN news, accessed 2 November 1999); Available from <http://my.cnn.com>; Internet.

<sup>20</sup> Richard H. Shultz, *In the Aftermath of War: U.S. Support for Reconstruction and Nation-Building in Panama Following Just Cause* (Maxwell AFB: Air University Press, 1993), 5.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas M. Leonard, *Panama, The Canal and the United States: A Guide to Issues and References*, Edited by Richard Dean Burns, Vol. 9, *Regina Guides to Contemporary Issues* (California: Regina Books, 1993) 16-33. Richard H. Shultz, 5-6.

<sup>22</sup> Leonard, 28.

<sup>23</sup> Leonard, 27-29, Shultz, 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Leonard, 31-33, Shultz, 5-6.

<sup>25</sup> Leonard, 41-42.

<sup>26</sup> John Weeks and Phil Gunson, *Panama: Made in the US* (Great Britain: Latin America Bureau, 1991), 40-42. See also, Leonard, 33 and Shultz, 7.

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<sup>27</sup> Shultz, 7-8.

<sup>28</sup> Leonard, 42-43.

<sup>29</sup> Weeks, 41-43, Leonard, 45.

<sup>30</sup> Donnelly, 15. The term *Noriega crisis* used to capture the time period from June 1987 when Noriega was implicated in the murder of Hugo Spadafora until the implementation of JUST CAUSE in December 1989. See also, Anthony Gray and Maxwell Manwaring, "Panama: Operation Just Cause," [article on-line](Institute for National Strategic Studies, accessed on 13 July 1999 and again on 29 March 2000); available from <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/books/policing/chapter2.html>; Internet.

<sup>31</sup> Rebecca L. Grant, "Operation Just Cause and the U.S. Policy Process," Prepared for the U.S. Air Force and RAND Corporation (Santa Monica: The RAND Publications Series, 1991), 17.

<sup>32</sup> The PDF attempted two separate, failed coup attempts against Noriega. The first attempt was made in March 1988, when the Chief of Police, Colonel Macias gathered approximately 20 officers to overthrow Noriega. However, Noriega's intensive intelligence/informant network warned him of the plan prior to the attempt so he was able to foil it. The second attempt occurred 5 October 1989, led by Moises Giroldi. This failed coup attempt is controversial due to the PDFs belief that the U.S. would assist them if they took proactive measures against Noriega. Upon seizing Noriega the PDF attempted to turn him over to US custody only to be turned away by SOUTHCOM. See, Buckley, 130, 197-208.

<sup>33</sup> Collin Powell, *My American Journey*, ed. Joseph E. Persico (New York: Random House, 1995), 349; 367. The quote is from page 27, Rebecca Grant. See also Donnelly, 34-36.

<sup>34</sup> Grant, 24-34.

<sup>35</sup> Grant, 34.

<sup>36</sup> Grant, 28-31.

<sup>37</sup> Antoine H. Jomini, "The Art of War," *Roots of Strategy, Book 2*, ed. Brigadier General J.D. Hittle (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 1987), 441. This quote is paraphrased in the text. The full quote is: *In wars of intervention the essentials are to secure a general who is both a statesman and a soldier; to have clear stipulations with the allies as to the part to be taken by each in the principle operations; finally, to agree upon an objective point which shall be in harmony with the common interests.*

<sup>38</sup> The direct quote is from Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 66. Woerner's military chronology can be found in Dean R. Heaton, *Four Stars: The Super Stars of United States Military History* (Baltimore, MD: Gateway Press, 1995), 73.

<sup>39</sup> Flanagan, 23. Woerner's surprise is also captured by Woodward, 66-68. Interestingly, in the interview conducted by John T. Fishel, 6 May 1991, Woerner's departure as the CINC, U.S. SOUTHCOM is never broached.

<sup>40</sup> Kevin Buckley, *Panama: The Whole Story* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 79.

<sup>41</sup> A detailed account of Woerner's assignments is captured in the *Register of Graduates and Former Cadets of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, The Class of 1899 Centennial Edition* (West Point, New York: Association of Graduates, 1999), 4-252. Additionally, a current resume is available on-line, "Fred Woerner," [data on-line] *Faculty of the Department of International Relations, Boston University* (Accessed on 29 March 2000); Available from [http://www.bu.edu/ir/faculty/cv/woerner\\_cv.html](http://www.bu.edu/ir/faculty/cv/woerner_cv.html); Internet.

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<sup>42</sup> United States, Army, "Major General Frederick F. Woerner, Jr.," *Department of the Army Pamphlet 360-10, Army Executive Biographies* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 21 February 1986), 495.

<sup>43</sup> For a comprehensive overview see William H. Drohan, "When All the Bills Came Due: The Development of U.S. Panamanian Relations Through 1989," *Operation Just Cause: The U.S. Intervention in Panama*, ed. Bruce W. Watson and Peter G. Tsouras (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1991), 17-28.

<sup>44</sup> Fred Woerner, General (RET), U.S. CINC South, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel, *Subject: Military Operations in Panama*, 6 May 1991.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> United States, Army, *Field Manual 101-5-1, Operational Terms and Graphics* (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 30 September 1997), 1-37. According to U.S. Army doctrine the term *constraint* is used and defined as: Restrictions placed on the command by a higher command to dictate an action or inaction, thus restricting the freedom of action the subordinate commander has for planning a mission by stating things that must or must not be done.

<sup>51</sup> Fred Woerner, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. These 3 assumptions are addressed since they received the most attention and criticism from General Thurman. It is assumed this is why General Woerner addresses them in the interview. It should be noted the planners made many more assumptions such as the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division augmenting USSOUTHCOM prior to XVIII Abn Corps, due to the 7th habitual training relationship with the 193<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade, Panama. Also, regarding the post-conflict mission it was assumed a Presidential call-up of the reserves would occur to draw the proper expertise and in civil-military operations.

<sup>53</sup> Donnelly, 17.

<sup>54</sup> United States, Army, "Brigadier General Bernard Loeffke," *Department of the Army Pamphlet 360-10, Army Executive Biographies* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 21 February 1986), 787. and *Register of Graduates and Former Cadets of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, The Class of 1899 Centennial Edition* (West Point, New York: Association of Graduates, 1999), 4-274. As the Chairman for the Inter-American Defense Board Major General Bernard Loeffke maintained correspondence with General Thurman after the invasion to provide insight into Panamanian personalities and organizations. Two such memos from Loeffke to Thurman are maintained in the Fort Leavenworth library archives, Inter-American Defense Board, Memorandum To: General Thurman, CINC SOUTHCOM, "Subject: Thoughts from the Sidelines," (Washington, D.C.) Signed by Major General Bernard Loeffke, January 8, 1990. and Inter-American Defense Board, Memorandum To: General Maxwell R. Thurman, CINC SOUTHCOM, "Subject: Lieutenant Colonel Eduardo Herrera Hassan, New Commander Panama Forces," (Washington, D.C.) Signed by Major General Bernard Loeffke, January 8, 1990. Today Bernard Loeffke is retired, he is a physicians assistant working in underdeveloped nations as well as a motivational speaker, see "General Bernard "Burn" Loeffke, USA (Ret.), [article on-line] (The Pacific Institute, Seattle Washington, accessed 29 March 2000); Available from <http://pac-inst.com/bureau/international/index.php3>; Internet.

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<sup>55</sup> Donnelly, 18-21. The Corps Commander at the time Lt. Gen. Foss and his operations officer Col. Tom Needham strongly believed they should be in charge of the JTF. Due to the amount of augmentation they would be providing to the USARSO JTF they were reluctant to give up so many of their personnel and equipment since they still had a requirement to respond to worldwide contingencies.

<sup>56</sup> Fred Woerner, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Donnelly, 18; Fred Woerner, General (RET), Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel.

<sup>58</sup> Fred Woerner, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel. In the interview Woerner lays out multiple strategies regarding how the military could facilitate change in Panama, from his vantage, he felt the U.S. role was to prompt change in Panama not to create and take charge of the change. Panama's problems had to be solved by Panamanian's. With time, patience, and support from the U.S. he believed Panama could, and would, solve their own internal problems.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. In the interview Woerner goes into detail to explain the triad and how it could facilitate Panama solving Panamanian problems. He dedicated a lot of thought to this concept and when it was forwarded to Washington, D.C. his frustration with the bureaucracy is evident.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Donnelly, 42.

<sup>68</sup> This quote appears in multiple sources to include Woodward, 66 and 67.

<sup>69</sup> "Fred Woerner," [data on-line] *Faculty of the Department of International Relations, Boston University* (Accessed on 29 March 2000); Available from [http://www.bu.edu/ir/faculty/cv/woerner\\_cv.html](http://www.bu.edu/ir/faculty/cv/woerner_cv.html). Internet.

<sup>70</sup> Buckley, 188.

<sup>71</sup> Inter-American Defense Board, Memorandum To: General Thurman, CINC SOUTHCOM, "Subject: Thoughts from the Sidelines" (Washington, D.C. Signed by Major General Bernard Loeffke) January 8, 1990. At the time he wrote this memo MG Loeffke was serving as the Chairman, Inter-American Defense Board, Washington, D.C. Of note MG Bernard Loeffke was a former Special Assistant CINC SOUTHCOM from 1985-1987 and served as the Commanding General, of SOUTHCOM in 1987. The preceding data can be found in a variety of sources to include the *Register of Graduates and Former Cadets of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, The Class of 1899 Centennial Edition* (1999; West Point, New York: Association of Graduates), 4-274.

<sup>72</sup> Flanagan., 22. TA-50 refers to Table of Allowance – basic issue of clothing and equipment. and "Gen. Maxwell R. Thurman, 1931-1995," *Army* January 1996, 9.

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<sup>73</sup> Donnelly, xviii; 52.

<sup>74</sup> Flanagan, 21-22. Flanagan captures the demanding, professional, and intelligent nature of General Thurman and the rigor he placed on subordinates. See also, Bob Woodward, 65. General Thurman's candor is also captured in the taped interviews.

<sup>75</sup> M.R. Thurman, General, US CINC South, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. Larry A. Yates, *Subject: Military History, Panama*, 11 December 1989. Dr. Lawrence A. Yates is a historian with the Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College (USACGSC), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He received a Ph.D. in diplomatic history from the University of Kansas. He has taught history at several colleges and universities in Kansas and Missouri for over 10 years. He has taught and conducted research focused on low intensity conflict at the USACGSC, and is the leading historian on the Panama intervention in 1989-1990 at that institution. and M.R. Thurman, General, U.S. CINC South, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel, *Subject: Military Operations in Panama*, 3 April 1991.

<sup>76</sup> Heaton, 64; United States, Army, "General Maxwell R. Thurman," *Department of the Army Pamphlet 360-10, Army Executive Biographies* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 21 February 1986), 25. The most comprehensive source in detailing Thurman's Army career is Heaton's chronology. Multiple sources were used to cross-check Thurman's career, although the following sources were not comprehensive they confirmed the chronology or contributed insight into his military experience. Additional sources include, Department of the Army, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, "Subject: Biographical Sketch of LTG Maxwell R. Thurman," 8 October 1981. Department of the Army, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, "Subject: Biographical Sketch of General Maxwell R. Thurman," 9 August 1988. "Gen. Maxwell R. Thurman, 1931-1995," 9.

<sup>77</sup> Heaton, 64.

<sup>78</sup> Donnelly, 52.

<sup>79</sup> Flanagan., 21; "Gen. Maxwell R. Thurman, 1931-1995," 9; Bob Woodward, 65.

<sup>80</sup> Flanagan., 21; Heaton, 64; "Gen. Maxwell R. Thurman, 1931-1995," 9.

<sup>81</sup> M.R. Thurman, General, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. Larry A. Yates.

<sup>82</sup> The direct quote is from Donnelly, 54. Additionally, Donnelly's book reemphasizes Thurman's familiarization with Washington, D.C. and the fact he was well known on *the hill*, 52-55. The desynchronization of General Woerner and the Bush administration is also addressed by Flanagan., 23.

<sup>83</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. Larry A. Yates. Due to Thurman's planned retirement, which coincided with his departure from TRADOC, his departure from that command was not changed when he was unexpectedly asked to remain on active duty due to the unforecasted retirement of General Woerner. This turn of events left Thurman with a lame-duck window from his scheduled departure from TRADOC until his assumption of CINC USSOUTHCOM. Since Thurman had already sent out his retirement ceremony invitations, the TRADOC change of command was conducted at that time and date, see Bob Woodward, 70-71. In the interview Thurman mentions that his only orientation to the region was as TRADOC Commander, where he had made gratuitous trips to several nations in South America, to include Columbia, Brazil and Panama.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. In the interview General Thurman stressed the time and amount of detail he took to learn about the region. He reiterated he was not a Latin American expert, and mentioned that although he felt relatively comfortable with understanding the language he did not speak it due to his limited training. He hesitated to test his limited linguist skills because he did not want to improperly mispronounce the



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language/dialect. These points may have been stressed in the interview due to the area expertise possessed by his predecessor General Woerner and the U.S. Army South Commander, General Cisneros. Additionally, Kevin Buckley, 192-193 briefly describes Thurman's whirlwind briefing tour in Washington, D.C. to familiarize himself with Latin America.

<sup>86</sup> M.R. Thurman, General, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. Larry A. Yates; M.R. Thurman General, U.S. CINC South, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel, *Subject: Military Operations in Panama*, 3 April 1991. Thurman comments on the contingency plans in both the Yates and Fishel interviews. Note the Yates interview was conducted prior to JUST CAUSE/PROMOTE LIBERTY. In this interview he just mentions his familiarization with learning about the region and looking at the contingency plans in the Fishel interview, after the invasion, he comments on the plans, what worked in them and what had to be modified.

<sup>87</sup> M.R. Thurman, General, US CINC South, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John Partin, *Subject: Military History, Panama*, 12 April 1990. This interview was conducted at Fort Benning, Georgia following the 1990 Infantry Conference. In this interview Thurman is very forthcoming and negative regarding his perception of the contingency plans and the capabilities of the USSOUTHCOM staff. Dr. Partin is a historian with the U.S. Special Operations Command.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. At the time he took the plan to the CJCS he was dealing with Admiral Crowe.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. It is worth noting that during Thurman's briefings in Washington, DC it is likely he was informed of XVIII Airborne Corps complaints regarding the proposed C2 in the CONPLAN. The Corps did not want to be subordinate to another unit and felt they had the equipment, manpower and expertise to conduct the mission, the J3 in the Pentagon was aware of their concerns.

<sup>91</sup> Bob Woodward, 71. Also noted in M.R. Thurman, Taped interview with Dr. John T. Fishel.

<sup>92</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John Partin. See also, Bob Woodward 70-74.

<sup>93</sup> United States, Army, "Major General Carl W. Stiner," *Department of the Army Pamphlet 360-10, Army Executive Biographies* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 21 February 1986), 445. Although dated, the biography provides a chronology of Stiner's career through the rank of Major General.

<sup>94</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John Partin. This is an interesting comment made after the invasion since the USSOUTHCOM staff was the original *conceptual organizers* of the plan despite all the constraints placed upon them.

<sup>95</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John Partin. This comment made by Thurman resonates in military folklore; upon closer inspection however Thurman may have short-changed his commanders and staff. Of note, Bernard Loeffke and Marc Cisneros were both regional experts and fluent in Spanish as well as officers that possessed strong tactical, command experience. See *Department of the Army Pamphlet 360-10 Army Executive Biographies*, "Brigadier General Bernard Loeffke," (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters Department of the Army, 21 February 1986), 787; Department of the Army Pamphlet 360-11 Army General Officer Resumes, "Resume of Service Career of Marc Anthony Cisneros, Major General," (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters Department of the Army, 18 March 1991), 1-3.

<sup>96</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John Partin.

<sup>97</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. Larry A. Yates. M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel, *Subject: Military Operations in Panama*, 3 April 1991. The interviews render a first-hand account by General Thurman regarding his CINC change of command date and issues he was concerned with. Also, it is worth noting that in 1988 while the State Department

advocated increased military intervention in Panama, General Powell, at the NSC, had presented arguments against the use of force. He believed there was a need for specific policy objectives to be devised. Approximately a year later, when Powell served as the CJCS, the changing political policy and the indictment against Noriega changed how the U.S. sought to address issues in Panama. For additional historical background on this specific timeframe and the debates among the State Department and DoD see, Grant, 24-27 and Powell, 415-417.

<sup>98</sup> Woodward, 85-87.

<sup>99</sup> Thurman, M.R., Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel; Flanagan, 27-29.

<sup>100</sup> Powell, 416-417.

<sup>101</sup> Woodward, 99-104; Thurman, M.R., Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John Partin. During the interview with Partin, Thurman stressed he felt he needed to step up the rehearsals and training to give the NCA confidence that if they wanted to act, with military intervention, that USSOUTHCOM was ready.

<sup>102</sup> Powell, 420-422; Flanagan, 47-48.

<sup>103</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John Partin.

<sup>104</sup> United States, Joint Task Force South, *Operation Plan 90-2* (Fort Bragg, North Carolina: Joint Task Force South, Headquarters XVIII Airborne Corps, 3 November 1989) 3. The Commander's Intent statement is not depicted in its entirety in the text. It goes on to give tasks and timelines to subordinate units and is three-quarters of a page long.

<sup>105</sup> Gen. Maxwell R. Thurman and Lt. Gen. William Hartzog. "Simultaneity: The Panama Case." *ARMY* November 1993, 16.

<sup>106</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel.

<sup>107</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John Partin.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Thurman and Hartzog, 16.

<sup>110</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John Partin.

<sup>111</sup> Thurman, and Hartzog, 22.

<sup>112</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel. Of note, Fishel's research concentrated on PROMOTE LIBERTY planning. In the interview it is apparent that the CINC shaped the post-conflict phase, but he executed actions ad hoc. For a first-hand, insightful discussions on PROMOTE LIBERTY see Marc Cisneros, Major General, CG USARSO/JTF-PM, Taped interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel, *Subject: Military Operations in Panama*, April 1991; Jack Pryor, Colonel, Deputy Commander/CofS U.S. Military Support Group, Panama, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. Lawrence A. Yates, *Subject: Military Operations in Panama*, 21 June 1990; James J. Steele, Colonel, Commander U.S. Military Support Group, Panama, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. Lawrence A. Yates, *Subject: Military Operations in Panama* 28 June 1990.

<sup>113</sup> Anthony Gray and Maxwell Manwaring, "Panama: Operation Just Cause," [study online] (Institute for National Strategic Studies, accessed 13 July 1999); Available from <http://www.ndu.edu/ndu/inss/books/policing/chapter2.html>; Internet. BG Benard Gann served as the USSOUTHCOM J-5 during this timeframe, an Air Force officer additional information on his professional

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background can be found in *Who's Who in America 2000*, (New Providence, New Jersey: Marquis Who's Who, 1999), 54<sup>th</sup> Edition, Vol. I, 1676.

<sup>114</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel.

<sup>115</sup> Anthony Gray and Maxwell Manwaring, available from <http://www.ndu.edu/ndu/inss/books/policing/chapter2.html>; Internet.

<sup>116</sup> United States, Joint Task Force South, *Operation Plan 90-2*, 3.

<sup>117</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel.

<sup>118</sup> USCINCSO Quarry Heights Panama, M.R. Thurman, Gen., CINC, Unclassified Message To: JCS Washington D.C., "Subject: U.S. Representation on Joint Committee," February 13, 1990. Ambassador Dean Hinton arrived in Panama several weeks after JUST CAUSE, prior to that the U.S. Charge d'Affairs, John Bushnell was on the ground.

<sup>119</sup> M.R. Thurman, Taped Interview conducted by Dr. John T. Fishel.

<sup>120</sup> USCINCSO Quarry Heights Panama, M.R. Thurman, Gen., CINC, Unclassified Message To: CJCS Washington D.C., Personal for Gen. Powell from Gen. Thurman. "Subject: Assistance for Panama," December 28, 1989.

<sup>121</sup> Margaret Roth, "Panama: Price of Victory," *Army Times* 4 June 1990: 13.

<sup>122</sup> Weeks, 102-105.

<sup>123</sup> Roth, 13.

<sup>124</sup> Franklin D. Margiotta, ed., *Brassey's Encyclopedia of Military History and Biography* (Washington: Brassey's, 1994), 755; Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 172; Michael Massing, "New Trouble in Panama," *The New York Review* 17 May 1990: 43.

<sup>125</sup> "Gen. Maxwell R. Thurman, 1931-1995," 9.

<sup>126</sup> M. Mitchell Waldrop, *Complexity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 21.

<sup>127</sup> United States, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington DC: JCS Publication, 10 June 1998), 325.

<sup>128</sup> For additional thought regarding creative or cognitive tension see Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of a Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 150-155. See also Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 13, 301.

<sup>129</sup> Senge, 8; 174-204. Mental models are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action.

<sup>130</sup> Shultz, 3.

<sup>131</sup> Senge, 7. Systems thinking is one of five disciplines considered vital to the creation and sustainment of a learning organization, it is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively.

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<sup>132</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Panama 2 Years After Operation Just Cause," [article on-line] (U.S. Department of State Dispatch, Washington, dated 10 February 1992, accessed on 24 January 2000); Available from <http://www.state.gov>; Internet. See also, U.S. Department of State, "Background Notes: Panama" [article on-line] (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, dated January 2000, accessed 19 January 2000); Available from [http://www.state.gov/www/background\\_notes/panama\\_0100\\_bgn.html](http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/panama_0100_bgn.html); Internet.

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